

*Some China*  
*Madsen*

# SOME CHINA PERSONALITIES

SKETCHED BY

JUEL MADSEN







# Introduction

“MY sketch book is my diary,” a friend of mine once told me, and this is the truth. Our sketches are notes in pictures and reproductions of impressions, while the finished work expresses the intention of the artist. In the sketch the artist hurriedly sets down the impression he receives from his model ; in the finished oil painting he tries to convey this impression to the onlooker.

These sketches are my diary because I have tried to reproduce my impressions of some people I have met in China and when I see these pictures I have the same feeling as if I were reading a real book. The people I sketched in charcoal grow real as in memory one after another passes by.

I can see the small, thin Chinese General, Wu Pei-fu, walking in the yamen of Paotingfu during the war, full of nervous energy, aristocratic—reminding one of a Napoleon—or a race pony. I remember his intelligent, pleasant smile as when we are having our breakfast he again and again asks my unwilling teetotaler interpreter to drink Chinese wine with him ; and I feel again the influence of this charming personality as do all other foreigners who have met him.

I can also see a certain charming lady, very popular and admired by everyone, but nevertheless willing to sit for me, while with the respect of the Anglo-Saxon for the other sex, but also with the pleasure of the Continental, I read her face and put down my results on the paper.

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I remember the late Foreign Minister, Dr. W. W. Yen ; the Idealist and Dreamer, Dr. Sun Yat-sen ; as well as the man who now represents the British in Shanghai, Mr. Sidney Barton, who at once impressed me when I saw him in Peking as possessing those characteristics which we admire in the British. Very naturally I remember "Pavlova" as it is only a few days ago that I sketched her in her dressing room in the Olympic Theatre, face to face with one of the most famous ladies in the world, the greatest artist in her line, and probably the sweetest and kindest person I have met.

Yes, this book is my diary, and in another sense of the word, too, which may be more difficult for the public to understand. This to explain : The famous Indian artist Tagore once said to me : " Our old books in Sanskrit tell us about the laws of art very clearly, giving us everything condensed as the doctor gives us pills. They tell us that we have more than forty arts in India, counting, for example, the doctor when he cuts nicely with his knife and the soldier when he is clever with his sword among the artists, and that the artist is a far more highly developed being than the ordinary man. Take, for instance, the musician who also is an artist. Nature told our fingers to touch and feel, but to the musician she teaches something more : his fingers not only touch the instrument, but produce divine music from it.

" And the painter has many pairs of eyes where the ordinary man has but the one pair. The ordinary eyes tell you : It is night : a car is coming : it is nine or ten o'clock : but they do not tell you what shape a face has. These ordinary eyes only work like an instrument such as the photographic camera or telescope, but the artist has other pairs of eyes, not only more

intelligent and able to see further than ordinary eyes but capable of remembering forms and shapes and reproducing them."

Now these sketches are a diary, a collection of notes about the exteriors of men and women, the shape of their heads, the shape of their lips and eyes, the colour of their hair. The first thing in portraiture is to give a characteristic reproduction of these external parts and this alone provides an immensely interesting field, for the world contains at least fifteen hundred million noses, pairs of eyes and lips, all built in the same way, yet with no two sets exactly alike. And even when we find a superficial resemblance, the personality of their owner gives them some difference of turn or expression : and to catch this, to present not only the superficial outline accurately, but to set down on paper or canvas the personality of the sitter, that is the greatest thing of all.

If the reader has followed me so far he will be able to judge the sketches as they should be judged and to look upon them from the artistic point of view.

This book, which only contains a small part of my work during my visit to China is the first of a series I intend to publish. The reason I am not publishing my work in oil and watercolours, but only sketches until I can get the coloured pictures reproduced in England, is because I have found it impossible to get satisfactory reproductions from coloured pictures in China. This is to be regretted, as colour gives the artist more possibilities, the public more satisfaction, and does the subject more justice than sketches in black and white.

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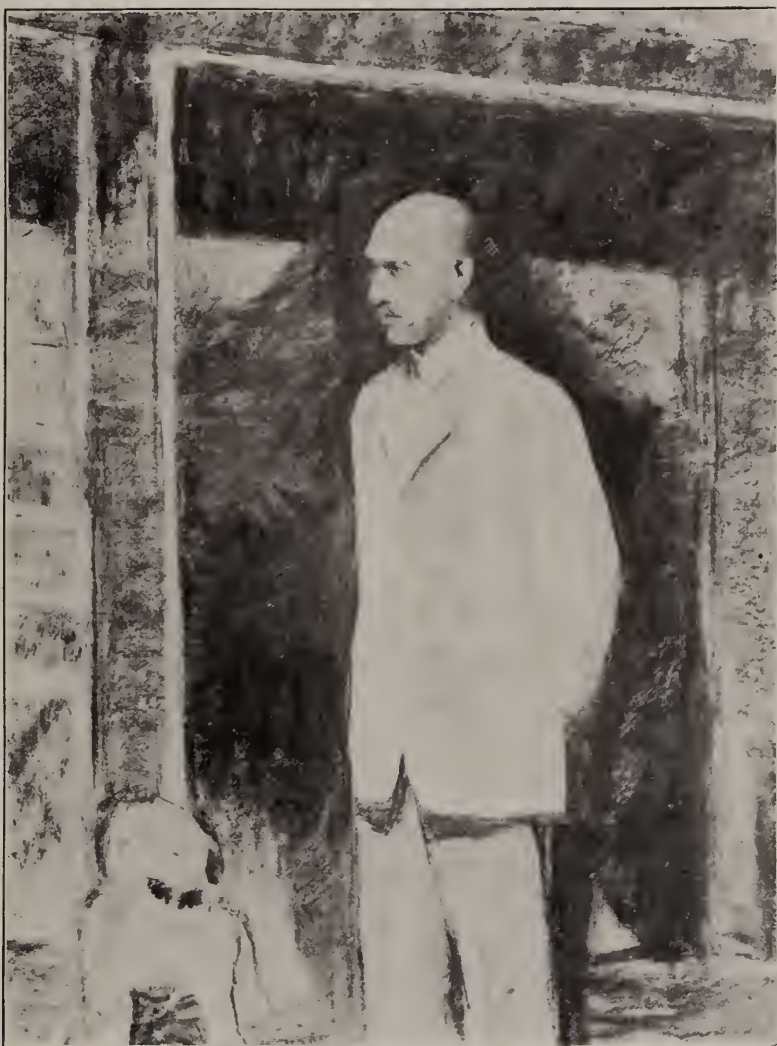
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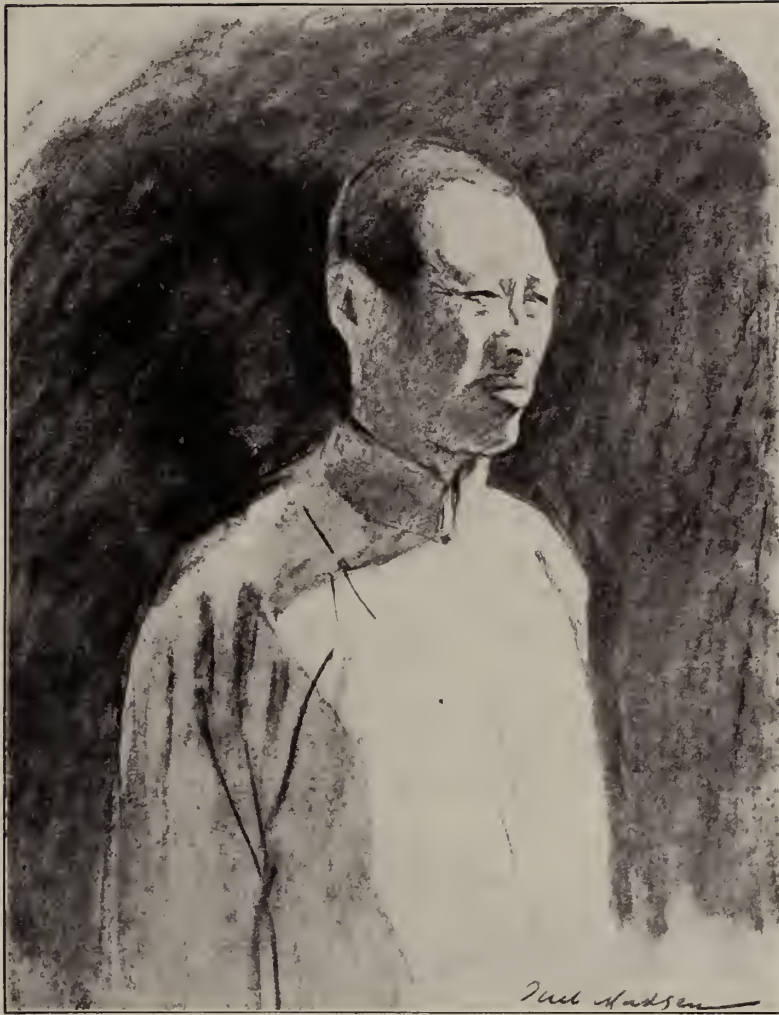






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